

# 2021-23 NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION RECRUITMENT & ENGAGEMENT PLAN

## SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for many volunteer-ran organizations #inBend. Neighborhood Associations in particular, have experienced high rates of board turnover and burnout over the last couple of years.

At the request of Mayor Russell, the Neighborhood Leadership Alliance (NLA) spent September – December 2021 focusing on recruitment and engagement opportunities to support Neighborhood Associations. The committee helped identify strategies the City, NLA and Neighborhood Associations (NAs) can help with to deepen benches and engage more members.

## PROCESS

At the NLA meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 12, City staff liaison Makayla Oliver led the committee through a brainstorming exercise to identify **barriers**, **successes** and **opportunities** regarding board and member recruitment and engagement.

Following the meeting, Makayla Oliver summarized the themes of the brainstorming session into “assumptions.” For each assumption there are short- and long-term strategies to address the barriers identified in each assumption.

Below you will find the assumptions and strategies, as well as the status of each.

## TASK KEY

The following colors demonstrate who the lead on each strategy is:

**Neighborhood Associations**

**City of Bend**

**Neighborhood Leadership Alliance**

★ = Recommendation/Not Tracked

X = Complete

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## ASSUMPTION #1

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access (DEIA) are buzzwords that cause confusion and fear for NAs, especially leading into 2021-2023 Council Goals which include a strategy to, “Assess the Neighborhood Association system as a conduit of information and representation and create opportunities to engage under-served communities” (p.3).

*SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES (GOAL BEFORE FEBRUARY 2022 END)*

- X **City offers NLA/NA Boards Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Training to set the stage for the Council Goals assessment and provide NAs with a basic understanding of representation.**

STATUS: COMPLETE

The City arranged a training for neighborhood leaders with Erika McCalpine and OSU-Cascades Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Lab to engage in a discussion about neighborhood representation, defining diversity in Bend neighborhoods, and engaging new members from underrepresented groups. This consists of two, 2-hour trainings in December 2021 and January 2022.

- **Dec. 13 Training #1 Recording** (not posted, can only access with this link): <https://youtu.be/ILXhvQXRPeM>
- **Feb. 7 Training #2 canceled by facilitator.** Will not be rescheduled. Contact Makayla Oliver for more information.

- X **Neighborhood Associations provide information on what they have done thus far to encourage diverse representation of boards and members.**

STATUS: COMPLETE

Following the training above, Makayla Oliver will visit with each of the Neighborhood Associations as part of the neighborhood assessment. During this time, Makayla will also gather information on what strategies are currently being used to engage underrepresented groups.

*LONG-TERM STRATEGIES (BEFORE BIENNIUM END)*

- X **City performs neighborhood assessment as requested in 2021-2023 Council Goals. City gathers information, assesses current structure of Neighborhood Associations and reports analysis and results.**

STATUS: COMPLETE

City staff plan to help implement any strategies and opportunities found in the assessment to support the Neighborhood Associations outreach to underrepresented groups.

- X **City performs assessment of own outreach strategy and structure as requested in 2021-2023 Council Goals. City gathers information, assesses current strategy and structure and reports analysis and results.**

STATUS: COMPLETE

Neighborhood Associations have received presentation on this assessment and results from Zavi Borja and can incorporate in their strategy to engage underrepresented groups where possible.

**X Neighborhood Leadership Alliance invites Community Relations Manager – Equity & Partnerships to present results of assessment of the City’s outreach strategy and structure.**

STATUS: COMPLETE

Following completion of the above assessments the Community Relations Manager – Equity & Partnerships can offer presentation of what was learned and how this information could assist NAs.

**□ City provides Neighborhood Associations with data on the demographic makeup of their members.**

STATUS: NOT STARTED – ESTIMATED SPRING 2023

Equity mapping is included in this biennium’s Council Goals. As these new data sets are available, we will provide to the NAs to help them have a better understanding of “who” is in their neighborhood. This is intended to help the NAs reach out to communities they are missing.

**□ Neighborhood Leadership Alliance works with Human Rights & Equity Commission to define best practices for engaging underrepresented groups in Neighborhood Associations.**

STATUS: DELAYED

Currently the Human Rights & Equity Commission are establishing themselves as a committee. Once they are in a place where they are ready to support outside groups, we can have this discussion.

**★ Neighborhood Associations implement processes for outreach to include learned information provided on best practices.**

STATUS: RECOMMENDATION, NOT TRACKED

At this point the NAs will have participated in a DEI training, will have data about “who” is in their neighborhoods, learned preferred communications practices for the Spanish-speaking community, and learned about engaging underrepresented groups in effective ways. It’s time for the NAs to develop an outreach process tailored to their NAs. Makayla and Zavi will help each NA if desired.

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## ASSUMPTION #2

Neighborhoods feel like the Council does not value the role of the Neighborhood Associations. The Council needs to support and promote neighborhoods as a valued tool to engage community participation in order for them to succeed.

### SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

- X **City invites City Council Liaisons to attend neighborhood assessment discussions with their NAs to help set expectations for the assessment.**

STATUS: COMPLETE

If desired by the NA, Council liaisons would be invited to attend the neighborhood assessment discussions alongside Makayla Oliver, and be available for questions and/or open the conversation with the vision of the assessment.

- X **City updates the Neighborhood Association highlight video.**

STATUS: COMPLETE

The last video on the Bend Neighborhood Associations was done in 2016, before the NLA was created! Makayla has re-written the video script and reached out with several neighborhood leaders and City Council to be a part of the video. Currently, the City's Communications Coordinator is conducting interviews (which have been weather-dependent). Will be released soon! Waiting on Anne's OK.

Featured in the video are some fabulous volunteers (thank you!):

- Councilor Megan Perkins
- Lisa Mushel (Century West)
- James Dorofi (Old Farm District)
- Summer Sears (Orchard District)
- Alex Puryear (Mountain View)

- **Neighborhood Leadership Alliance helps to define meaningful Council engagement of neighborhoods.**

STATUS: NOT STARTED – WHEN NLA HAS ROOM ON AGENDA

Neighborhood members feel unheard. The City and Council cannot respond to every email, every call and/or every input. How do we help them feel heard? This could be a simple NLA discussion, and could result in educational opportunities and new methods of engagement to build trust with the NAs. This could result in recommendations for Council to consider. Makayla will work with NLA to get this on the agenda.

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### ASSUMPTION #3

People don't know what a Neighborhood Association is. More communications and outreach about Neighborhood Associations will help address some of the misperceptions about their purpose.

#### SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

##### X **City features NAs on Inside Bend Podcast.**

STATUS: COMPLETE

Inside Bend features City staff discussing their work at the City of Bend. Makayla Oliver was interviewed about the Land Use Education Plan and Neighborhood Association involvement. The episode was released in January 2022.

You can listen at [www.bendoregon.gov/inside-bend](http://www.bendoregon.gov/inside-bend) or the podcast can be found on Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts or Spotify.

##### X **City provides local organizations with brochures about Neighborhood Associations.**

STATUS: ONGOING

The City has several hundred "overs" of the joint brochure from this past summer. Makayla Oliver dropped off 100 brochures with Visit Bend in November. Working with Zavi Borja to discuss partnership options, including appropriate distribution of Spanish brochures.

##### X **Neighborhood Leadership Alliance pushes out Neighborhood Communications Survey previously done in 2019.**

STATUS: COMPLETE

This survey measures preferred communication method, level of trust and engagement with neighborhood members and will help NAs understand how important trust and communications needs. It is a baseline survey that was first launched in 2019 and is meant to be repeated, at minimum, every biennium.

2019 Survey Results:

<https://www.bendoregon.gov/home/showdocument?id=51448>

2021 Survey Results:

<https://www.bendoregon.gov/home/showdocument?id=51938&t=637771605821223130>

□ **Neighborhood Leadership Alliance revisit the social media manager strategy Hootsuite.**

STATUS: DELAYED

An initiative from 2021 that was delayed. Social media managers auto-post on social platforms. The idea is to come up with regular messages that can go out for participating NAs - start with a sampling of general NA messages to get it started. Increasing social presence is a good start to more member engagement.

**UPDATE:** Shared tools were a big part of feedback received as part of the Neighborhood Assessment project. Looking into more options for this, which may or may not include the purchase of Hootsuite.

★ **Neighborhood Associations begin outreach to new Neighborhood Association members.**

STATUS: RECOMMENDATION, NOT TRACKED

Makayla Oliver included information in the December Neighborhood Leader Newsletter about how to access information on home sales within Neighborhood Association boundaries. The Office of Performance Management created a mailing list tool which lists “recent home sales,” providing NAs with an idea of who is recently purchased a home in the neighborhood. This is a great opportunity to design a postcard or something that can be mailed once a month or some sort of ongoing basis.

X **Neighborhood Associations host a fall/winter/spring general membership meeting.**

STATUS: ONGOING

Many NAs have found success when advertising board openings at and before general meetings. They also have had success in getting new registered members. These meetings can be virtual, the real tool here is the mailing that goes out prior, driving people to each individual NA website.

**Past/Upcoming:**

- Awbrey Butte: Nov. 4
- Boyd Acres: March 23
- Century West: April 20
- Larkspur: Nov. 4
- Mountain View: Aug. 23
- Old Bend: Jan. 12
- Old Farm District: July 15
- Orchard District: April 26
- River West: Feb. 24
- Southeast Bend: July 15
- Southern Crossing: Nov. 18
- Southwest Bend: Nov. 18
- Summit West: Nov. 16

*LONG-TERM STRATEGIES*

**X City to propose features in Bend Chamber programs.**

STATUS: COMPLETE

The Bend Chamber has a lot of educational, community-focused programs. The City has provided info on Neighborhood Associations on several occasions for Bend Young Professionals events. The City is going to be included in helping design the new “Bend 101” program that will soon be launched. The City could propose including Neighborhood Associations for Bend 101 and Leadership Bend.

Thanks to Ron Paradis with Orchard District for arranging a Neighborhood Association table with the Leadership Bend Alumni Association on Feb. 24, 2022.

**UPDATE:** The Neighborhood Associations are now a part of Leadership Bend and Bend 101 programming. The City will have a Neighborhood Association table at each of the Bend 101 events. We will continue to look into these opportunities as they arise.

- **Neighborhood Leadership Alliance look into changing “Neighborhood Associations” to “Districts” or similar, to help with the confusion between HOAs/NAs.**

STATUS: NOT STARTED/NO RESOURCES – SUGGESTED AS NLA INPUT ON COUNCIL GOALS

The NLA could ask Council for permission to explore. This effort could be combined with taking another look at the purpose of NAs within the code to expand beyond land use.

- **Neighborhood Leadership Alliance pushes out the Communications Survey at the end of the biennium to understand how assessment and strategy implementation has helped.**

STATUS: NOT STARTED – ESTIMATED SPRING 2023

This is the third time this survey will be issued. This survey measures preferred communication method, level of trust and engagement with neighborhood members and will help NAs understand how important trust and communications needs.

- ★ **Neighborhood Associations use data provided by the Communications survey input to adjust their outreach tools and messages.**

STATUS: RECOMMENDATION, NOT TRACKED

The first of two Communications Surveys will be completed in January 2021. NAs can begin using the data from that survey to make adjustments to their outreach.

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#### **ASSUMPTION #4**

Board turnover is an issue for most NAs. With constant turnover, neighborhoods find themselves losing information in the transitions and having a hard time getting away from the “start-up/survival” mentality and motivated to do more.

#### *SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES*

- City to provide common ways of outreach that NAs could consider.**

STATUS: IN PROGRESS – AFTER NUSA MAY 2022

Makayla Oliver can create a list of ideas or best practices for NA outreach. These can include successful initiatives used by neighborhoods all throughout the nation, and some from NAs right here in Bend.

**UPDATE:** The NLA is sending a representative to the Neighborhoods, USA 2022 Conference. Ideas learned from this conference will be included.

- City will broadly advertise NLA committee position openings as it does for other committees.**

STATUS: ONGOING

Previously the City did not advertise openings because the recommendation comes from the NAs, which are geographically located. Now, when there is an opening on the NLA or an upcoming term end, the City will put out a press release advertising the openings, and direct applicants to the appropriate NAs for their interviewing and recommendation. Even if the applicants do not become NLA reps, they could be good board candidates.

- Neighborhood Leadership Alliance receives presentation from a subject-matter expert on recruitment and engagement.**

STATUS: NOT STARTED – TURNING INTO A TRAINING FOR NAs

The City can work with the NLA to pull together a panel of neighborhood and community committee experts to discuss board recruitment and engagement. This could also be an NA training, depending on the NLA schedule.



- **Neighborhood Leadership Alliance discuss roles and descriptions for NA board members.**

STATUS: NOT STARTED – WHEN NLA HAS ROOM ON AGENDA

Volunteers are easier to come by when the workload is well defined ahead of time. This will allow all of the NAs to share what they do on their boards to engage new board members. They could also discuss standard practice for collecting demographics when accepting applications.

- ★ **Neighborhood Associations create postings for open positions on Volunteer Central Oregon.**

STATUS: RECOMMENDATION, NOT TRACKED

Once the NLA comes up with some roles and descriptions for NA board members, the NAs can pick what they need and create postings on Volunteer Central Oregon. They can also use this in other outreach and they can consider adding specific positions to their bylaws or processes.

- ★ **Neighborhood Associations collaborate on hiring a facilitator for a training to help define best practices for board operations.**

STATUS: RECOMMENDATION, NOT TRACKED

Prior to the pandemic, the Neighborhood Association Round Table (NART) planned a training with a professional facilitator. Facilitators are skilled in helping NAs find their mission, purpose, operations and policy guidelines...etc.

- ★ **Neighborhood Associations get a better understanding of what connections are available from board and Council Liaison.**

STATUS: RECOMMENDATION, NOT TRACKED

Relationships are the most effective way of getting dedicated board members. What relationships do you have? Your board? Your Council Liaison? Recruiting shouldn't rest on one person's shoulders, it should be a group effort.

### *LONG-TERM STRATEGIES*

- **City offers a 3-part board training for all NAs: Training 1) Member & Board Recruitment Best Practices, Training 2) General Board Operations & Resources, Training 3) Effectively Representing Neighborhood Members.**

STATUS: IN PROGRESS

This 3-part training could be offered annually and the topics could change. Makayla Oliver will start with some general board topics pertinent to the turnover we are seeing. NAs could vote on these topics every year. City staff can lead these trainings.

★ **Neighborhood Associations find a way to be included in the annual Central Oregon volunteer fair.**

STATUS: RECOMMENDATION, NOT TRACKED

The Nonprofit Association of Oregon partners with Volunteer Central Oregon annually to host a **Volunteer Board Fair**. This is a great opportunity to recruit board members because interested volunteers visit this fair to find their next board commitment.

★ **Neighborhood Associations create succession plans for their neighborhoods.**

STATUS: RECOMMENDATION, NOT TRACKED

Boards who have term limits and a clear path for volunteers to handoff their roles are more likely to survive being left in a pinch when multiple board members resign at once. May be worthwhile to hire a subject-matter expert to walk through this planning process.

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## ASSUMPTION #5

Neighborhood Associations are written into code with land use as being a main purpose and focus. Neighborhoods feel that there is no benefit to being a part of an NA unless someone is interested in land use, traffic safety and local government. Focusing on controversy will not keep people engaged once the controversial topic has been moved on from. This eliminates a lot of people who aren't interested in those items.

## SHORT-TERM STRATEGIES

X **City remove restrictions placed on Communications funding.**

STATUS: COMPLETE

City announced in November to the NLA that it will now allow for spending to support member recruitment & engagement. This will allow for more community engagement such as community-building events, beautification projects...etc. that weren't previously able to be funded.

★ **Neighborhood Associations discover passion projects that your neighbors can be invested in.**

STATUS: RECOMMENDATION, NOT TRACKED

Survey your members! Host a community conversation with your neighborhood! By creating projects and opportunities that people care about and can see tangible results with, NAs will be more apt to have long-term engagement.

*LONG-TERM STRATEGIES*

- **Neighborhood Leadership Alliance work with the City to explore and potentially change the Neighborhood Association purpose in the Bend Code.**

STATUS: NOT STARTED/NO RESOURCES – SUGGESTED AS NLA INPUT ON COUNCIL GOALS

Controversy may get people in the door, but what will help them stay? The City believes community-building is an important part of what being a NA is. NAs have a variety of beliefs about the NA purpose from educating people on land use to building neighborhood connections. Let's discuss and see if we can nail down an agreed-upon purpose of the Bend NAs, and how it relates to the code.

- X **Neighborhood Leadership Alliance will react to questions for the Neighborhood Community Survey (part of the assessment).**

STATUS: COMPLETE

The City will be working with a qualified firm to conduct a survey to 1) Obtain a sense of how Bend residents perceive the Bend Neighborhood Associations as a conduit of information and representation, 2) Gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of the current Neighborhood Association system, and 3) Identify what barriers are to Neighborhood Association engagement. The NLA will see the proposed questions and given an opportunity to react and provide input.

**UPDATE:** After working with Embold Research, the survey company suggested not sharing actual survey questions due to the potential for skewed results. Instead, the NLA was asked to provide suggestions on the types of questions that were asked in the survey. Input was received and incorporated.

★ **Neighborhood Leadership Alliance / Neighborhood Associations attend Neighborhoods USA.**

STATUS: RECOMMENDATION, NOT TRACKED

NUSA is a network of neighborhood leaders. The 2022 NUSA conference is in Little Rock, AK. There may be funding to help NLA/NA members attend. Neighborhoods from all over attend. Not everyone has the same structure as Bend. Maybe there are other, more appealing models that could inspire the NAs.

**UPDATE:** The NLA is sending Chair Summer Sears to attend the conference. Summer will provide a report-back in May to the NLA and all NAs will be invited to learn more about what Chair Sears learned at NUSA 2022.